

## Message Text

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61

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /009 W

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R 221437Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5986

INFO AMCONSUL KADUNA

AMCONSUL IBADAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OTRA, PINS, NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS:KOTT ORIENTATION TRAVEL

REF: (A) LAGOS 8099 (B) STATE 181146

1. JULY 19 MEA AMERICAS DEPARTMENT DEPUTY DIRECTOR ZUBAIRU INFORMED POL THAT KOTT DID NOT IN FACT HAVE PERMISSION TO TRAVEL OUTSIDE LAGOS. CHARGE CHECKED WITH DEPUTY CHIEF OF PROTOCOL EFETIE WHO GAVE THE SAME IMPRESSION, SAYING THIS WAS NOT A MATTER FOR MEA TO DECIDE ALONE; THE MINISTRY HAD TO CONSULT APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES AND HAD NOT YET RECEIVED THE NECESSARY CLEARANCE. IN A TELEPHONE CALL TO CHIEF OF PROTOCOL BALEWA JULY 21, THE LATTER ASKED CHARGE FOR KOTT'S SCHEDULE. CHARGE REPLIED THE SCHEDULE HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN EMBASSY'S NOTE TO MEA JULY 19; DID BALEWA WANT THE SCHEDULE IN GREATER DETAIL OR WANT OTHER INFORMATION? BALEWA SAID THE INFORMATION WAS FINE BUT HE WANTED IT IN THE FORM OF A SCHEDULE DRAWN UP BY THE EMBASSY RATHER THAN IN A NOTE TO THE MINISTRY. THEN IT WOULD BE AN "EMBASSY SCHEDULE" RATHER THAN AN MEA DOCUMENT. HE SEEMED RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS THE MATTER OVER THE PHONE. CHARGE VISITED BALEWA LATER THAT AFTERNOON

WITH TRAVEL SCHEDULE TYPED ON SEPARATE SHEET. BALEWA PERUSED IT, FOUND IT ENTIRELY ACCEPTABLE, AND SAID IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HIM IN NOTIFYING LOCAL OFFICIALS OF KOTT'S COMING. HE RAISED NO OBJECTION TO FACT THAT KOTT WAS TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY EMBASSY AND CONSULAR OFFICIALS ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CERTAIN PORTIONS OF HIS TRIP, AND HE MADE NO REFERENCE TO

WHY HE WANTED THE SCHEDULE ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER. BALEWA ASSUDED TO THE AMERICAS DEPARTMENT'S HAVING TOLD US EARLIER THAT KOTT COULD NOT TRAVEL. HE SAID THAT OFFICE HAD JUST NOT BEEN IN THE PICTURE; HE HAD ALREADY DECIDED THAT KOTT SHOULD TRAVEL FOR THE REASONS WE HAD DISCUSSED JULY 14 AND THEY HAD NOT RECEIVED THE WORD.

2. CHARGE RAISED THE WIDER QUESTION OF TRAVEL IN GENERAL, POINTING OUT THE EXCESSIVE LENGTH OF TIME THAT HAD INTERVEENED SINCE HEAD OF STATE MUHAMMED'S ASSASSINATION, AT WHICH TIME THE TRAVEL BAN WAS UNDERSTANDABLE. NOW, HOWEVER, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO EXPLAIN THE CONTINUED RESTRICTION TO WASHINGTON; WHAT SHOULD WE SAY? BALEWA WAS OBVIOUSLY EMBARRASSED AND HAD NOTHING TO SAY EXCEPT THAT WE ARE

CIVILIANS AND THIS IS A MILITARY REGIME AND THE MILITARY HAS THEIR OWN WAY OF DOING THINGS. CHARGE ASKED IF BALEWA COULD GIVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH LONGER THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS WOULD CONTINUE. HE REPLIED WITH SEEMING ASSURANCE THAT GENERAL TRAVEL SHOULD BE PERMITTED AGAIN WITHIN TWO OR AT MOST THREE WEEKS.

3. COMMENT: FOREGOING CONFIRMS IMPRESSION WE HAVE HAD THAT TRAVEL BAN WAS IMPOSED AND IS BEING MAINTAINED BY THE MILITARY (PRESUMABLY THE NEW JOINT POLICE-MILITARY NIGERIAN SECURITY ORGANIZATION - SEE LAGOS A-50), AND MEA HAS BEEN SEEKING FOR SOME TIME TO HAVE IT LIFTED. CURIOUS ASPECT IS THAT BALEWA SOMEHOW APPEARS TO HAVE SUFFICIENT CONFIDENCE TO APPROVE KOTT'S TRAVEL ON HIS OWN AUTHORITY. ONE MIGHT INFER THAT HE WANTED THE KOTT SCHEDULE ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER BECAUSE ITS CIRCULATION WITHIN THE FMG IS THE FORM OF A DIPLOMATIC NOTE MIGHT REACH SOME OFFICE WHICH HE DID NOT WANT TO KNOW ABOUT IT. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE APPEARED TO HAVE NO CONCERN ABOUT INFORMING APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS UP-COUNTRY OF KOTT'S COMING. THIS IS ONE MORE ENIGMA BEHIND THE OPAQUE FACE OF NIGERIAN BUREAUCRACY. AT ANY RATE, WE RECEIVED THE

ENCOURAGING IMPRESSION THAT TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS MAY AT LAST BE NEARING AN END. THE DAO HAS SIMILARLY BEEN INFORMED THAT TRAVEL SHOULD BE POSSIBLE AGAIN ABOUT MID-AUGUST. WE SHALL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SEE.

4. MEANWHILE, KOTT VISIT IS PROCEEDING AS PLANNED. FOLLOWING A FULL SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS WITH VARIETY OF OFFICIALS AND BUSINESSMEN IN LAGOS THIS WEEK, HE WILL VISIT MOBIL OIL INSTALLATION AT KWA IBO (CROSS RIVER#XJAE) JULY 26-27. CONSULATES ARRANGING MEETINGS AND TOURS IBADAN (JULY 29-31) AND KADUNA, JOS, ZARIA, KANO (AUGUST 1-6).

KOTT EXPECTED DEPART LAGOS FOR U.S. AUGUST 7.  
CROSBY

NOTE BY OC/T: LAGOS 8435, #PARA 4 AS RECEIVED.

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